

**S**OLDIERS are needing papers, not old papers that are soiled and out of date, but new and fresh ones such as you want to come to your home. A week or two ago we mentioned the great need in the reading rooms of our training camps. As hundreds of men gather in these reading rooms every day, at least four copies of a paper ought to be sent to each of them. We made an offer to bear one-half of the expense of supplying the Presbyterian of the South for this purpose. To furnish what are needed will require about five hundred copies. We have had a number of responses to our offer, but there are still needed a large number to supply the need. For each dollar sent us for this purpose we will send a copy of the paper to a reading room for a year. How many of our readers will help us? Are there not some churches, Sabbath schools or societies that would like to furnish a reading room or a camp? Write to us about it.

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**P**RAYER meetings are a great help to the church. The First church, Columbia, S. C., of which Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Blackwood is pastor, has recently had a series of home prayer meetings which were well arranged for, and which we are sure must have done good. On Monday and Tuesday nights of the week before the Communion service these meetings were held. They were preparatory to preaching services in the church for the remaining nights of the week. The congregation was divided up into ten districts, with a committee of three of the members of the church in charge of each. A different home was selected for each meeting. A carefully prepared list of the people convenient to a particular home and who could be expected to attend the meeting at the home was prepared. The committee was expected to see that each of these persons was personally invited by a member of the committee or some one representing it. The hostess of the home where the meeting was to be held was also asked to give a personal invitation to each of these persons. Hymn books were provided from the church. The subjects selected for these meetings were, "My Church" and "Our Church." People were urged to bring their Bibles. Suppose ten home prayer meetings could be held each week in each church of similar size and a proportionate number in other churches, what a wonderful help it would be to the church. Many would be reached who do not attend the midweek service at the church, which is not always a prayer meeting.

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**K**NOCKING on wood is one of the queer superstitions that finds its adherents among all classes of people. When the believer in this superstition has reason to mention any blessing received or being enjoyed, he immediately knocks on wood, for fear that some ill fortune may come to him. We wonder how many of these people know the origin or meaning of the practice. It is one of the strange combinations of paganism and Christianity which find their way into the mental make-up of many intelligent people, because they do not stop to find a reason for the faith that is in them. This is said to be the explanation of this custom. In the days of our pagan ancestors they believed that they were constantly surrounded by evil spirits whose business was chiefly to see that human beings were made as miserable as possible. If they found that any good fortune or happiness had come to these mortals, those wicked spirits would set to work to destroy their happiness by bringing some misfortune upon them. These fearful mortals considered these evil

designing spirits very timid and thought that they could be driven away by noise, as the Chinese think that in the same way they can drive away the dragon who is about to swallow the moon when it goes into an eclipse. To accomplish this object they would strike upon something hard. When Christianity came to these believers in evil spirits, they held on to the superstition, but were careful to knock on wood, as the Saviour's cross was made of wood, and they would in this way make a secret appeal to him, while appearing to others just to keep up the old custom. Probably no one who follows this practice today has any idea of appealing to the Saviour to drive away the evil spirits of misfortune. But does not the feeling that prompts this act, even when done thoughtlessly, show a wrong state of mind? If we have some good fortune or some cause for happiness, has it not come from God? Will He send some evil upon us for mentioning in a proper spirit the blessings that He has given us? One of the best ways in which we can show our thankfulness to God is to tell others of His goodness to us.

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**W**AR by-products have proved to be many. An exchange says that one of them is a growing wave of honesty that is sweeping over the country. Bills are being paid more promptly. Old accounts that have stood for years are being settled. This, no doubt, is due to two causes. Many people have more money than usual, notwithstanding the high cost of living. Another reason is that people are looking duty more seriously in the face than they ever did before. Our own experience shows that many old accounts have been paid recently. We hope some others will soon be settled.

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**S**EVENTY-FIVE years is a good old age for a religious paper. The American Messenger, published by the American Tract Society of New York, has just completed its three-quarters of a century of service. But no reader would ever think of it as being old. It has drunk at the fountain of eternal youth, as is shown by the freshness and vigor of the contents of its pages. For seventy-five years it has been telling "the old, old story," which is ever new. We hope that for many years more it may go on with its good work of preaching in such an effective way the gospel of God's grace for the sinner.

#### THE WOMAN'S AUXILIARY.

The most remarkable work done in the Southern Presbyterian Church of late years has been the work of the Woman's Auxiliary. Because it has no sounding trumpet before it, no continued presentation through the press, it perhaps has escaped the notice of many of our people. It is well to note that it is an auxiliary and not an independent, or even a semi-independent organization. It is under the control of a body of men from our Executive Committees, and has always shown a loyal agreement with the wishes of the Church.

At its head has been a woman of rare executive ability, and great suavity of manner. Her vision of woman's work has been clear and consistent and toward the goal set before she has steadily and triumphantly pressed. Her fellow-helpers have been the choice women of our Southern Church; and a more devoted and spiritual body of women cannot be found. The Synodicals and Presbyteries have been interesting and inspiring; in nothing transcending the best ideals of our Southland, and yet showing a grasp of the part woman is to play in

this modern world in all its relations to the Church and the kingdom.

The woman's work of the Southern Church was in a chaotic condition when this Auxiliary came into being. There was vast deal of loyalty and love for the old Church; a wonderful amount of determined zeal and quite a deal of efficiency. But societies overlapped. Some churches were overorganized, and most were not organized at all. Most societies were devoted to, and working for, one or perhaps two causes, and were ignorant of and indifferent to the others. There was no balanced thought and effort. The contributions from these societies were good, but by no means represented the amount the women could raise.

There are no cheering acquaintance between the women of the various churches and sometimes little between the women of the same church, but in different societies.

That all has been done that can be done is true. The causes are many. Sometimes it has been the indifference or even opposition of the minister. The Session has been slow to recognize the value of organized and instructed work. Misrepresentation has played some part in this retarding woman's work. But what has been accomplished?

The raising of a large amount of money has been the least of the good work. Every benevolent cause has received largely increased amounts. And this golden stream has flowed straight into the treasuries without intermission. What dire straits our Executive Committees would be in but for this is appalling even to think of.

Each cause has received its pro rata amount or at least approximated it. Some causes that were neglected till the Secretary did not know whether the women of the church knew or cared anything about it, have had revivifying stream of interest and money poured on it from the women's societies.

The women of the church who in general think more about the kingdom of God than the men, have begun to see that there are several sides to the service of the kingdom. And as where the treasure is the heart is, these good women have poured out their love for these causes as never before.

The women have come to know and inspire each other. There is such a thing as provoking one another to good works. They have provoked not only the women, but even stirred up the men; and the \$3,000,000 drive owes much of its inspiration to the talking of the women in the homes about the needs of all our causes.

A contagion for Christ has spread abroad until no church considers itself in good and regular standing in the Presbytery that does not have its women harnessed up to this Auxiliary.

New work has been entered upon. New societies have sprung up until every church has some kind of kindred organization. The Auxiliary has presented a sensible and scriptural plan of organizing the women of the church into a woman's society, with its corresponding committees, and while, in the case of old societies, it is not always feasible to readjust the running machinery, yet the women are rapidly falling into line in this new and sensible plan.

New fields of labor have been opened up, notably in the work for negro women, never before tried in our Church. The very first conference for the training of negro women was organized by the Auxiliary under the leadership of Mrs. W. C. Winnsborough.

We venture to say that the reports for the year are going to show an unusual advance; and the Presbyterian of the South cordially